



# THE BOOTSTRAP PLAN RETRENCH, REFRESH, RENEW

2021 - 2024

A Three-Year Business Plan for the New Travel Alberta  
to Jumpstart Alberta's 10-Year Tourism Strategy







Boundary Ranch, Kananaskis Country / Karl Lee

## BOOTSTRAP (ˈbʊt,strap)

### NOUN

bootstrap (noun) •

bootstraps (plural noun)

1. a loop at the back of a boot, used to pull it on.
2. a means of advancing oneself or accomplishing something.

### VERB

bootstrap (verb) • bootstraps (third person present)

3. get (oneself or something) into or out of a situation without the aid of others.

### ADJECTIVE

bootstrap (adjective)

4. **relying entirely on one's efforts and resources.**
5. **self-generating or self-sustaining.**

# INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the establishment of the National Parks system in Canada, Alberta has enjoyed a “must-explore” reputation amongst Canadians and international visitors. Anchored by the iconic Rocky Mountains and brand-builders like the Calgary Stampede, Alberta became a destination for visitors chasing adventure in modern cities, historic towns, and rugged, ancient landscapes. Later, the development of the energy sector created an important stimulus for business travel to our key centres of Calgary, Edmonton, and Fort McMurray, driving investment and development of accommodations and meeting spaces, accordingly.

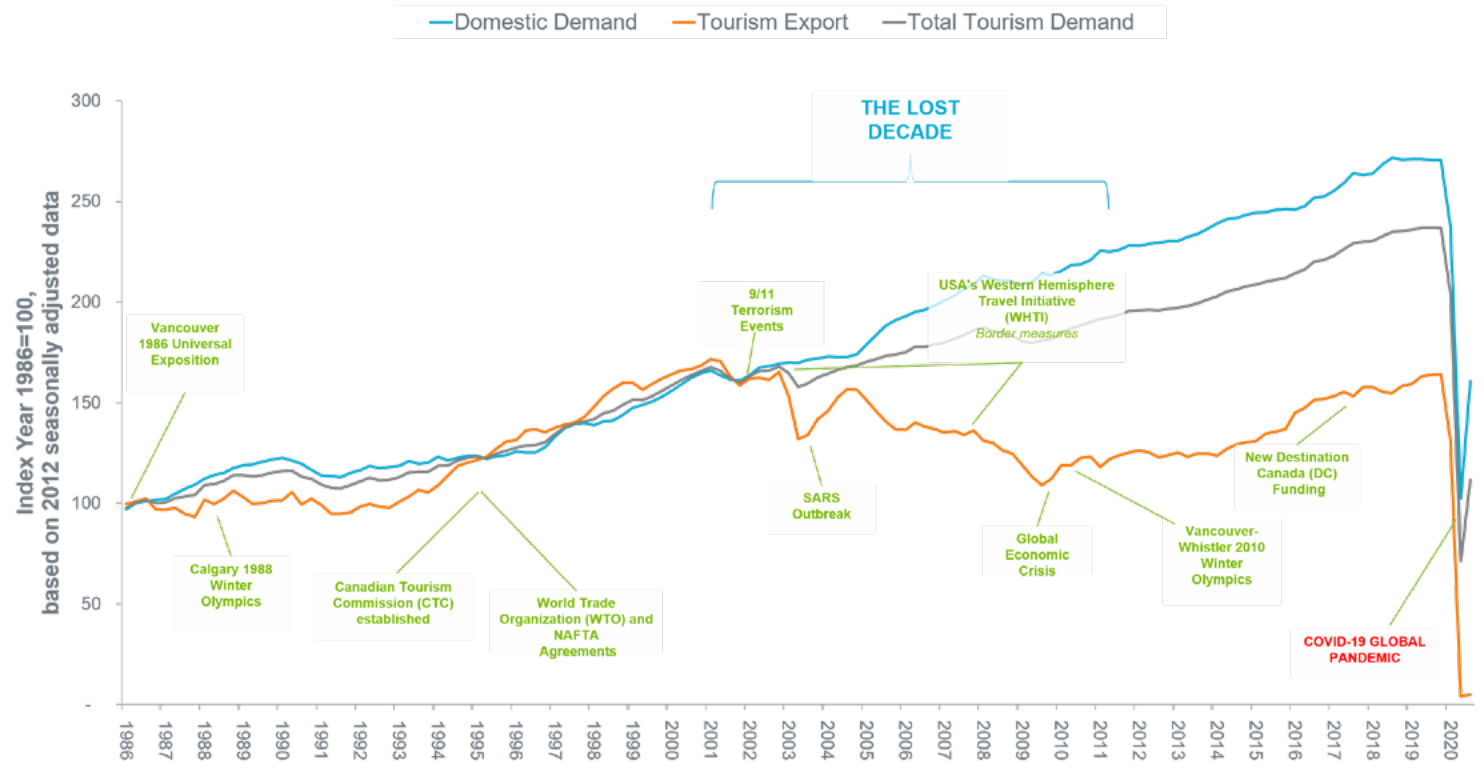
Much like the rest of Canada, in the later part of the 20th century, Alberta’s tourism industry reaped the benefits of its proximity to the U.S. market and a predictable and favourable currency exchange with the U.S. dollar. However, unlike the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, and B.C.’s lower mainland, which collectively have access to a base of 45 million Americans within a six-hour drive, Alberta is primarily a fly-to market. So, while Alberta’s fortunes as a leisure and business destination tracked with relative stability with the rest of Canada, we have always had to fight just a little bit harder for that higher-value international visitor.

Alberta, like much of North America, experienced a “lost decade” post 9-11, resulting in a reduction of international visitation. At the same time, Alberta lagged behind its U.S. and Canadian competitors (i.e., B.C., Ontario, and Quebec) in product and destination development due to an uncertain policy and regulatory environment. However, from 2011-19, Alberta benefited from the success of global tourism emerging as one of the fastest growing sectors on the planet, and Canada’s fastest growing services export sector.<sup>1</sup> Much of this success can be attributed to the growing disposable income in major developed countries and a new emerging middle-class amongst the developing economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRIC).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> UNWTO, Why Tourism.

<sup>2</sup> Travel Market Report, BRIC Nations Drive Global Tourism Growth (2013).

## LOOKING BACK







The Burmis Tree, Crowsnest Pass / Chris Amat

This led to a decade of unprecedented growth in the aviation sector, which included the development of new aircraft and air liberalization, resulting in new air routes for Calgary and Edmonton with increased international routes that might have been otherwise unsustainable.

Canada, at a national level, and Alberta at a provincial level, began to see limitations to this growth trajectory starting in 2018 – well before the pandemic crisis. Sensing these headwinds, Destination Canada developed a long-term strategy to guide future growth of the tourism sector.<sup>3</sup> In 2019, the Government of Alberta and Travel Alberta began the development of a 10-Year Tourism Strategy, intended to take a broader destination management approach to growing and diversifying the province's tourism industry.

In some ways, COVID-19 changes everything and it changes nothing. What we know is that EVERYONE in the visitor economy needs to hit the restart button, and future success will be determined by accelerated growth in the first three years coming out of this crisis.

## THE OPPORTUNITY

Alberta's visitor economy plays an important role in local and provincial economic wealth and prosperity. According to research conducted in 2016 by Longwoods International,<sup>4</sup> destination development and promotion creates a "halo effect" contributing to a positive overall impression of a destination. Consumers who recalled destination promotion campaigns were not only more likely to visit, but also more likely to have a positive impression of a destination as a good place to live, retire, start a business, or attend post-secondary. As we look towards a post-pandemic world, Alberta's tourism industry will play a central role in the province's economic recovery and future success.

The global tourism industry has been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, Alberta's tourism industry generated \$8.2 billion in revenue, supported 20,000 businesses, and generated

nearly 68,000 jobs in communities throughout the province.<sup>5</sup> Based on a February 2021 Tourism Economics forecast,<sup>6</sup> which assumes that borders will remain closed until November of 2021, tourism expenditures are expected to fall to \$4.9 billion for 2020, marking a 48 per cent decrease as compared to 2019.<sup>6</sup> Further, they are not expected to return to 2019 levels for regional until the later part of 2021, 2022 for the rest of Canada, and 2024 for the U.S. and overseas. January 2021 unemployment rates for Alberta's tourism sector were more than double, as compared to the total labour force. While some of these jobs are likely to be recovered when travel and health restrictions ease and travel resumes, there is currently a decline of just over seven per cent of active tourism businesses in Alberta.<sup>7</sup>

In 2019, the Government of Alberta identified tourism as a priority sector for economic growth and job creation and set an ambitious target to double tourism expenditures by 2030. While not impossible, this will be challenging.

<sup>3</sup> Destination Canada, *Unlocking the Potential of Canada's Visitor Economy* (2018).

<sup>4</sup> Longwoods International, *The Halo Effect of Tourism* (2016).

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada, *Visitor Travel Survey and National Travel Survey* (2019).

<sup>6</sup> Tourism Economics, *Travel Impact Scenarios and Spending Segmentation for Alberta* (February 2021).

<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada, *Tourism Custom Tabulation from experimental estimates for business openings and closures for Canada, provinces and territories, seasonally adjusted*.

# THE NEW TRAVEL ALBERTA

In 2021, Travel Alberta was given the expanded mandate as a full destination management organization. Under this new mandate, Travel Alberta will assume responsibility for destination development in addition to promotion, streamlining and uniting the responsibilities for growing Alberta's tourism sector within one organization. This, coupled with the pandemic, provides a unique opportunity to re-envision our approach to tourism in Alberta.

To drive increased industry relevance, Travel Alberta will make data and research informed business and investment decisions. Travel Alberta will also increase its commercial literacy to help drive economic returns to Alberta's tourism businesses.

To strengthen accountability, Travel Alberta will adopt a multi-tiered approach to tracking and reporting the effectiveness of the organization over the course of the three-year business plan cycle. This will include a collection of metrics based on the activities of each business area as well as macro level industry metrics to monitor progress in advancing the recovery and growth of the tourism industry.

As the provincial destination management organization, Travel Alberta is positioned to support economic recovery through the delivery of coordinated programs and services that will support and position Alberta for strategic, responsible and sustainable growth.

## ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE (ESG) FOCUS

As a public sector agency, Travel Alberta recognizes it has a responsibility to be accountable for more than growing Alberta's

tourism economy and contributing to economic recovery. We must also ensure that that agency has a positive impact on society. Our customer – the traveller – as well as industry stakeholders, our team, Albertans, and the Government of Alberta expect that of us, and we are acutely aware of our role in positively impacting social and environmental issues. Through Travel Alberta's transition to a destination management organization, we understand the importance of supporting responsible and sustainable tourism investment on provincial Crown lands. New and expanded tourism products will drive visitation to new destinations and regions across Alberta and this must be done with a triple bottom line (environmental, social, and economic) approach to benefit Alberta's communities and residents.

The pandemic is having a significant impact on our industry and has underscored the need for Travel Alberta to support and develop broader ESG corporate goals. We have assessed our vision and mandate to ensure we better understand stakeholder needs and are committing to a renewed focus on our organization's purpose. This is critical, and we will use our purpose and values as a 'north star' to guide decision making through the continued uncertainty ahead.

We recognize the importance of making our purpose inclusive of all team members' and stakeholders' perspectives, to ensure our efforts are relevant and impactful. Travel Alberta must make informed, value-led decisions that will benefit a broad range of stakeholders. Most ESG goals are not easy to solve in the short-term or single-handedly. Developing new authentic Indigenous experiences and achieving meaningful progress on diversity in our workplace and business practices will be our focus over the next three years and will require us to be innovative and collaborative.

Reviewing our processes, systems, and language, and unlearning





outmoded attitudes or behaviours, needs to be thoughtful and intentional. Therefore, we want to take a thoughtful approach to planning proper action. We know this work will not happen overnight and this process of learning and change will take time. Travel Alberta will be diligent, paying attention to how these issues affect us and those around us. We are committed to acting on, continually improving, and sharing our learnings with industry and to be transparent on updates and progress on this important work.

## INDIGENOUS TOURISM

Indigenous tourism in Alberta provides increased economic and socio-economic prosperity for Indigenous entrepreneurs and communities, while also contributing to our commitment to reconciliation. Indigenous tourism has the power to change perspectives, to preserve culture, language and traditions, and to provide our Indigenous tourism entrepreneurs and Indigenous communities with a platform to be the leading voice in reclaiming their space in history— both early and modern.

Travel Alberta, in-partnership with Indigenous Tourism Alberta, industry partners, and governments, will work to support Indigenous tourism businesses and communities, helping to diversify Alberta's visitor economy across regions and seasons. This includes supporting the growth and development of Indigenous tourism experiences through a new three-year \$3.75 million partnership funding commitment to Indigenous Tourism Alberta. Travel Alberta will support Indigenous businesses and communities with funding, and marketing and development support to ITA, its members, and existing Indigenous products and experiences throughout the province.

Travel Alberta will increase the awareness and 'sense of place' of Alberta as a premier Indigenous tourism destination through content development and strategically aligned partnered marketing initiatives. Travel Alberta will invite visitors to see the majestic lands of Alberta, experience the best of our legendary hospitality, and feel a deep connection through our shared traditions and storied history.

## RECONCILIATION, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (REDI)

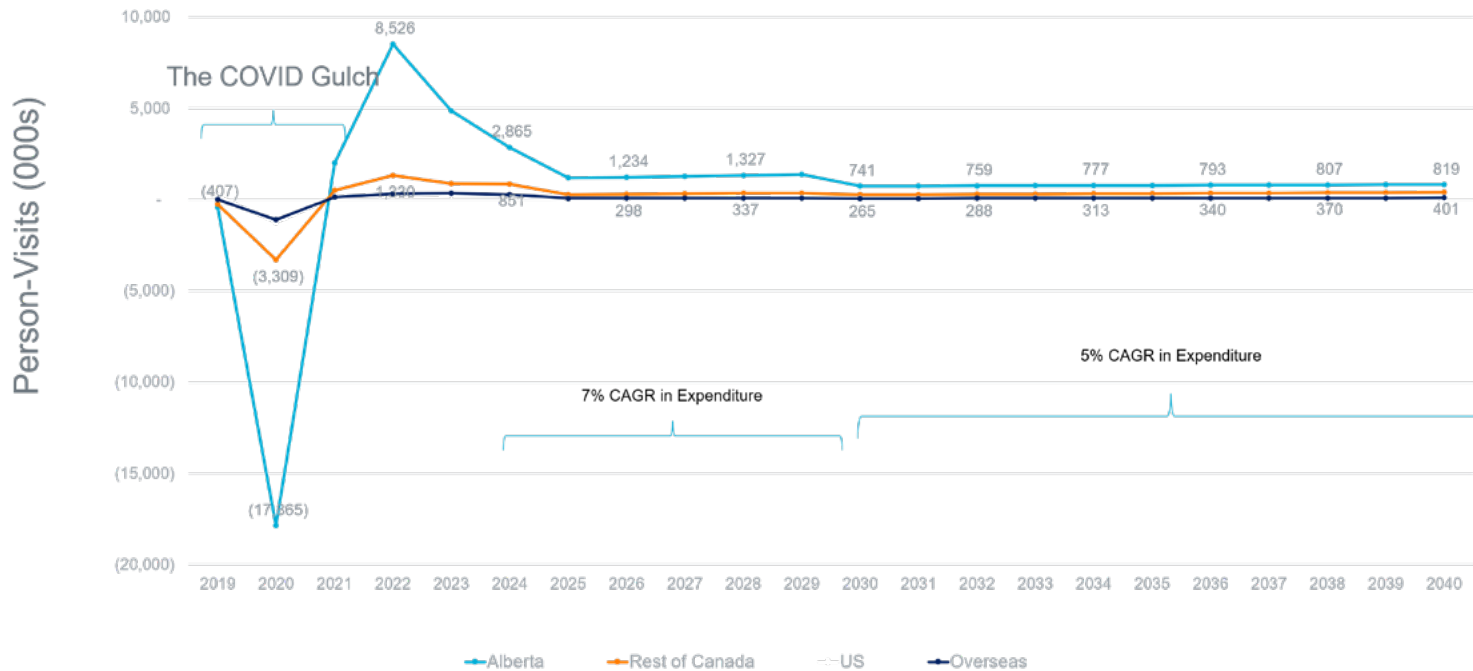
Travel Alberta is committed to taking a thoughtful approach in defining and setting actions to improve reconciliation, equity, diversity, and inclusion within our organization and in all aspects of our work. Research shows diverse, equitable, and inclusive organizations significantly outperform those that are not. Through our work, we will ensure that our organization works together in a commitment not only because it is the right thing to do, but because it will help us become a stronger performing business to better serve our industry and the people of our province.



## JUMPING THE COVID GULCH

We know the recovery of Alberta's tourism sector is going to take time. But we also know that through the development of a smart and strategic plan, we can retrench, refresh, and renew the sector to avoid another lost decade. To achieve this, Travel Alberta and our tourism partners – Team Alberta — must overcome barriers and impediments that have hindered growth and work together to outpace our competition, putting Alberta's tourism industry back on the path to growth. A coordinated effort and prioritization of policy, funding and resources from numerous ministries will be needed to support the growth of the sector. This must be done while maintaining a strong commitment to a triple bottom line approach, respecting and balancing community, environmental and economic considerations.

### IN(DE)CREASE IN VISITS (000s): 2019-2040

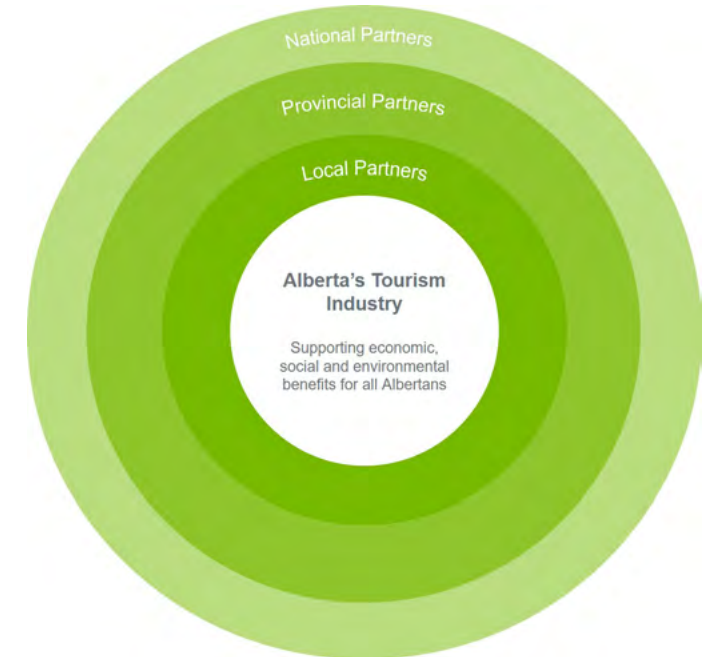


#### Local Partners

- LOCAL GOVERNMENTS
- REGIONAL/LOCAL DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS
- 20,000 TOURISM BUSINESSES
- LOCAL BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS

#### Provincial Partners

- TRAVEL ALBERTA
- MINISTRY OF JOBS, ECONOMY AND INNOVATION
- INDIGENOUS TOURISM ALBERTA
- PROVINCIAL SECTOR ASSOCIATIONS
- GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA MINISTRIES



#### National Partners

- DESTINATION CANADA
- INDIGENOUS TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA (ITAC)
- INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CANADA
- NATIONAL SECTOR ASSOCIATIONS
- GOVERNMENT OF CANADA MINISTRIES
- NATIONAL BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS



# TRAVEL ALBERTA RESPONSE

## YEAR 1: RETRENCH

2021-22

The expanded mandate provides Travel Alberta with the opportunity to accelerate short-term industry support, re-envision our business model, objectives, and desired outcomes. We will focus on establishing a new direction for the organization, providing relevant, impactful, and nimble destination promotion and management programs that propel revenue and investment opportunities, aimed at instilling a new commercial culture and driving increased industry relevance.

## YEAR 2: RENEW

2022-23

Capitalize on anticipated pent-up demand, starting in 2022 through 2024, to rebuild Alberta's visitor economy, while focusing on continually growing and rebalancing our strategic priorities to fulfill the visitor experience and lay the groundwork for future growth through continued investment and the execution of strategies and programs initiated in 2021-22.

## YEAR 3: REFRESH

2023-24

Focus on coordinated efforts with government partners and other tourism stakeholders – prioritizing programming, funding, and investment in a compression dispersal strategy – to support sustainable growth of Alberta's tourism sector and visitor economy.



Kananaskis Outfitters, Kananaskis Country / Karl Lee



# STRATEGIC PILLARS

Travel Alberta's Bootstrap Plan will focus recovery efforts on three strategic priorities: Marketing, Access, and Place.

To achieve this, Travel Alberta will undertake a three-year, data-driven framework to accelerate the rebuild and spur future growth.

Key objectives and targets, addressing the three strategic priorities and maximizing corporate operational efficiencies to prioritize budget allocation to tourism development and promotional activities, are highlighted in the following sections.

## MARKETING



The new Travel Alberta will concentrate efforts on increasing alignment and creating efficiencies with key tourism partners within a collaborative brand strategy. The strategy will include efforts to regain market share and compete with other destinations that will also be striving to capture pent up travel demand.

Travel Alberta's approach will include alignment with data and analytics, supporting informed decision making, with the goal of achieving superior revenue data for Team Alberta and creating clear and aligned channel lanes.

The impacts of COVID-19 have changed visitor behaviors and perceptions creating the need for a tailored and thoughtful approach to attracting the right visitor. Driven by research and data, Travel Alberta will develop a personalized approach to reaching our high-value visitor to ensure the delivery of the right content at the right time. We will also ensure that we have a visitor servicing model that supports a leading-edge digital experience in destination, including optimizing our digital channels and ensuring we are providing the best user experience possible. This will be the key to attracting visitors to Alberta and moving them around the province. The profound changes in the travel world coupled with the organization's changing mandate present an opportunity to refresh and reconsider Travel Alberta's award-winning brand going forward.



## ACCESS

The new Travel Alberta will work with airline and airport partners to re-establish and build Alberta's air links. Unlike our Canadian competitors (B.C., Ontario, and Quebec), Alberta is not a drive market, and revitalized air routes will be key to our success and future growth. Using key research and

insights and a Team Alberta approach, Travel Alberta will lead the development of a strategy to enhance key domestic, U.S. and international routes.



## PLACE

The new Travel Alberta will continue to support Alberta's tourism businesses and communities through a series of programs and services that will support the development of new and enhanced tourism products and experiences in support of regional and seasonal diversification.

This will be undertaken through a "corridors and clusters" strategy aimed at identifying and growing new regional destinations, based on a hub and spoke plan with major cities and airports at its core.

To further support destination diversification, Travel Alberta will work with government and industry partners to build a plan for sustainable tourism on crown lands. The collaborative plan will identify regions, land bases and specific opportunities across the province to that would be appropriate for new commercial tourism investment.

The result of this new path forward will not only pave a new trail for Travel Alberta, but a new trajectory for tourism in Alberta and all our partners – where our biggest challenge will become our greatest strength. As we work together to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps and dig ourselves out of the "COVID Gulch," we will build a brighter tomorrow when we can safely welcome back the world.



High Level Bridge, Lethbridge / Roth and Ramberg



## STRATEGIC PILLAR I: MARKETING

The Travel Alberta destination promotion team is at the forefront of national, provincial, and regional discussions to proactively promote the return of tourism to Alberta. Our strength as Team Alberta is critical to our competitive advantage in targeting the right audience in domestic and international marketing and using our resources efficiently and as effectively as possible. By working closely with our strategic partners, we are closely aligning our efforts to start the rebuild together.

### DIAGNOSTIQUE

The past year brought the booming global tourism industry to a grinding halt. As international borders closed, provinces discouraged inter-provincial travel, and Albertans stayed close to home for the duration of the year. With Alberta tourism businesses continuing to struggle, promoting Alberta as a destination of choice was carefully

balanced with safety messaging and constantly changing visitor behaviour.

The immediate recovery plan starts with Alberta residents. This past year, Travel Alberta has worked closely with our partner ministries within the Government of Alberta and our tourism industry to carefully deliver the right messages that resonate with our regional visitors, the Alberta ambassador. Across the country, Albertans have consistently ranked as the most willing to welcome visitors from other communities and provinces to their backyard.<sup>8</sup>

In 2021, Travel Alberta will continue to engage Alberta residents as a key audience and an important market for recovery. Moving forward, while ensuring health and safety measures are adhered to, we must balance our focus on regional promotions with the need to readily welcome back visitors from the rest of Canada and around the world (Figure 5.0 - Appendices).

### KEY OBJECTIVES

1. Align with Strategic Partners
  - Drive alignment and efficiency with key tourism partners including Destination Canada, airlines, Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs), Indigenous Tourism Alberta, Invest Alberta, and other strategic partners.
  - Travel Alberta is seen as a valued and knowledgeable contributor with national and international stakeholder groups.
2. Engage the High-Value Visitor
  - Drive incremental revenue from high-value audience segments based on a data-first approach.
  - Modernize digital channels to engage the high-value visitor,

<sup>8</sup> Destination Canada, Resident Sentiment Surveys (2021).





develop visitor insights through the traveller journey from awareness to consideration to purchase.

### 3. Increase Consideration of Alberta as a Travel Destination

- Create a competitive Destination Brand.
- Through our destination promotion programs, increase search intent of Alberta as a travel destination.
- Drive visitation to more regions across more seasons.

## TRAVEL ALBERTA RESPONSE

During this time of recovery, our destination promotion efforts will see the greatest success when we target travellers with compelling messages about Alberta experiences when and where they are looking. This means working closely with our industry to reshape how

we promote experiences that meet the needs of today.

Our marketing starts at home with Albertans. We will support our industry to promote travel that inspires weekend getaways and vacations with family through familiar marketing channels.

Next, we will invite our Canadian neighbours to drive or fly to the province by working with our airline and national partners through direct to consumer marketing, digital, social, and earned media.

When international borders open, we will work closely with Destination Canada to make Alberta a destination of choice through consumer marketing and a focus on engaging tour operators and travel agents who sell Alberta product that resonates.

All of our destination promotion efforts will be executed with compelling brand messaging that ensures loyal visitors return again and those who do not know Alberta put our province at the top of their list to visit.

## TARGETS

STRATEGIC PILLAR	OUTCOME	METRIC	TARGET 2021-22	TARGET 2022-23	TARGET 2023-24
Marketing	Consideration of Alberta as a travel destination has increased	Search growth for Alberta destinations YOY	17% domestic only	9% domestic and U.S.	5% domestic and U.S. and other Int'l
	Marketing investments generate revenue from high-value visitors	Direct economic impact based on attributable room nights	\$7.8M U.S. only	\$9.7M U.S. only	\$13.5M U.S. and other Int'l
		Attributable revenue* (In development)	Baseline year	TBD	TBD



YEG Airport / Mike Seehagel



## STRATEGIC PILLAR II: ACCESS

Prior to the pandemic, tourism in Alberta benefitted from strong air access from many national and international markets, including 70 per cent of U.S. visitors to Alberta arriving by air. Alberta's ability to regain its strong domestic and international air service network is key to the province's economic recovery.

Direct air service to priority domestic and international markets facilitates trade, investment, and tourism, and strengthens cultural and social relationships between markets. Recovering and increasing direct routes or frequency between Alberta's two major international airports and priority markets will improve Alberta's competitiveness as a business and leisure destination by reducing the need to connect through other competing centres such as Vancouver, Toronto, or major U.S. airports.

### DIAGNOSTIQUE

#### Pre-Pandemic

- Alberta's commercial airports can be sorted into three categories based on departing seat capacity:

1. The province boasts two large international airports:

- » Calgary International Airport (YYC)
- » Edmonton International Airport (YEG)

2. Two medium sized airports:

- » Fort McMurray International Airport (YMM)
- » Grande Prairie Airport (YQU)

3. Five smaller regional airports:

- » Red Deer Regional Airport (YQF)
- » Lethbridge Airport (YQL)
- » Medicine Hat Regional Airport (YXH)
- » Lloydminster Municipal Airport (YLL)
- » High Level Airport (YOJ)

- Prior the pandemic, Alberta had service to 31 destinations in Canada, 24 in the U.S., and 25 international, ranking second in the country in domestic and transborder seats per capita, and fourth internationally.
- YYC benefits from being the home of WestJet, while YEG is





## SUMMARY OF CHANGES IN AIR SERVICE CONNECTIVITY

OBJECTIVE	DOMESTIC	TRANSBORDER	INTERNATIONAL
Changes in Connectivity	10 destinations lost	17 destinations lost	24 destinations lost
	-71.2% seat capacity	-92.7% seat capacity	-96.3% seat capacity
Industry factors affecting air service recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aircraft retirements have resulted in smaller regional aircraft fleets</li> <li>Regional carriers stepping up and entering smaller markets abandoned by WestJet and Air Canada</li> <li>Strong network expansion by ultra low-cost carriers such as Flair Airlines betting on leisure demand uptick</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel restrictions and testing requirements continues to be a barrier to transborder demand recovery</li> <li>Pent-up leisure travel demand by Americans an opportunity for expedited recovery once the border opens</li> <li>Startup U.S. carriers offer new opportunities to build transborder air links</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of established global standard by countries on travel restrictions and testing expected to be a barrier</li> <li>Widebody aircraft retirements by Air Canada challenge airports in requiring long-haul service</li> <li>Uneven global vaccination rates may hamper recovery in inbound tourism</li> </ul>
Air service recovery action plan	Restore key regional to Alberta hub connectivity; restore capacity domestic destinations	Re-establish key transborder routes for inbound tourism and economic development	Accelerate return of European and Asian services, ensuring connectivity to regional airports

home to two low-cost carrier headquarters: Flair and Swoop.

- Alberta ranks as the fourth largest visitor economy in Canada behind Ontario, B.C., and Quebec; but unlike these markets, Alberta is not located within close proximity to a large U.S. population base and is therefore more reliant on air service rather than “rubber tire traffic” for transborder visitors.
- Alberta’s well established international business community (largely energy-based) and location as a major warehousing and distribution centre in western Canada, have played a key role in attracting and sustaining national and international air service by both Canadian and foreign carriers.

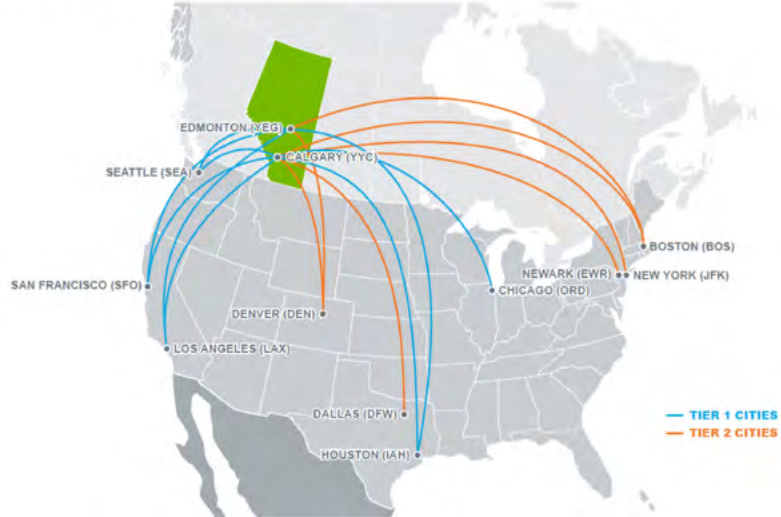
with accompanying timelines to increase high-value visitation to Alberta.

2. Develop effective stimulus and incentive programs for Travel Alberta to best drive air service recovery.
3. Clarify how best to structure and allocate Travel Alberta resources to deliver ongoing support to grow and sustain targeted air service between Alberta and key markets.
4. Ascertain research and data needs for internal and external stakeholders to inform air service business and investment decisions.
5. Set targets for new seats and destinations served by Alberta airports.

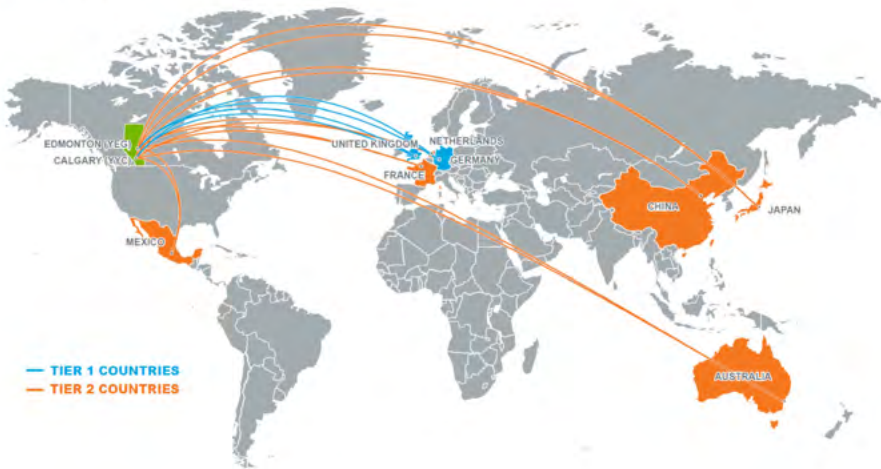
## KEY OBJECTIVES

1. Identify prioritized domestic, transborder and international routes

**U.S. CITIES  
FLIGHT PRIORITY**



**INTERNATIONAL  
MARKET PRIORITIES**



**TRAVEL ALBERTA RESPONSE**

Travel Alberta will undertake the development of an air service recovery strategy. The strategy will provide a roadmap to make effective investment and business decisions to stimulate and support route development. It will include recommended approaches and partnership/collaboration opportunities based on best practice models, as well as a defined criterion for selecting airlines and routes in which to target and invest.

**TARGETS**

STRATEGIC PILLAR	OUTCOME	METRIC	TARGET 2021-22	TARGET 2022-23	TARGET 2023-24
Access	Air service to key destinations is re-established, frequency on key routes is increased and service to new destinations is added	New/recovered Domestic destinations and seat capacity	+ 2 routes + 46K seats	+ 2 routes + 33K seats	+ 2 routes + 18K seats
		New/recovered Transborder destinations and seat capacity	+ 4 routes + 40K seats	+ 2 routes + 32K seats	+ 30K seats
		New/recovered International destinations and seat capacity	+ 12K seats	+ 1 route + 20K seats	+ 1 route + 30K seats

Based on ticketing, air passengers and Google search





Athabasca River / Roam Creative



## STRATEGIC PILLAR III: PLACE

The visitor economy presents an opportunity to diversify and grow communities across Alberta. Our collective ability to capitalize on the entrepreneurial spirit and geographical diversity of Alberta, provides a landscape to grow new year-round experiences and develop destinations to ensure Alberta is globally competitive. The Travel Alberta Destination Development Team will create a new road map, with a strategic approach to destination and product development, which will advance Alberta's position as a desirable destination for visitors, attract investors, create jobs, and heighten pride of place for residents.

### DIAGNOSTIQUE

Travel Alberta has a long history of supporting tourism industry partners, destination marketing organizations, communities, and tourism businesses with expertise and resources. Through the pandemic, Travel Alberta has been a valuable partner for industry, providing financial aid and guidance for businesses adapting to a rapidly changing business environment. In 2020-21, Travel Alberta connected with over 3,000 businesses and organizations and facilitated the distribution of nearly \$18 million in financial relief and assistance to

industry partners.

Under our new mandate, Travel Alberta will expand its focus on destination development to support the building of more compelling experience clusters and corridors, new infrastructure, and services to advance Alberta's competitiveness. Our focus will be on the needs and desires of current and future visitors and the ability of regions, communities, businesses, and organizations to deliver the products, services, and experiences in demand now, and in the future.

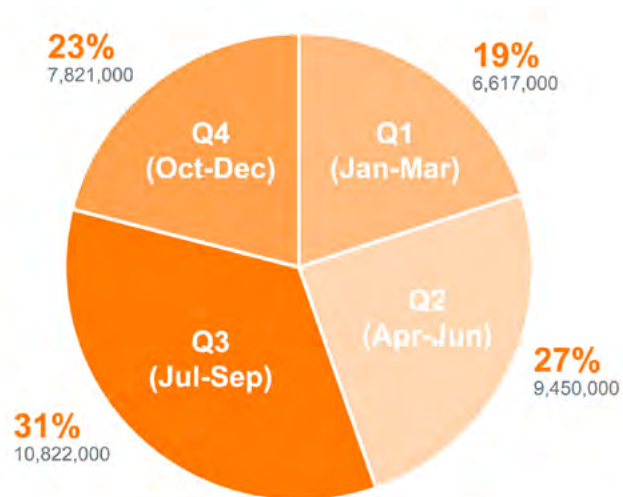
Nearly 60 per cent of visitation and 75 per cent of expenditures in Alberta are concentrated in the mature destinations of the Rockies and Alberta's two major urban centres (Edmonton and Calgary). There is an opportunity to disperse visitation to other regions of the province with the development of compelling experiences. Many of Alberta's smaller communities and rural destinations do not have a key attractor and rely on a collection of small businesses offering activities and experiences to attract travellers. These collectives provide the opportunity to create effective tourism clusters.



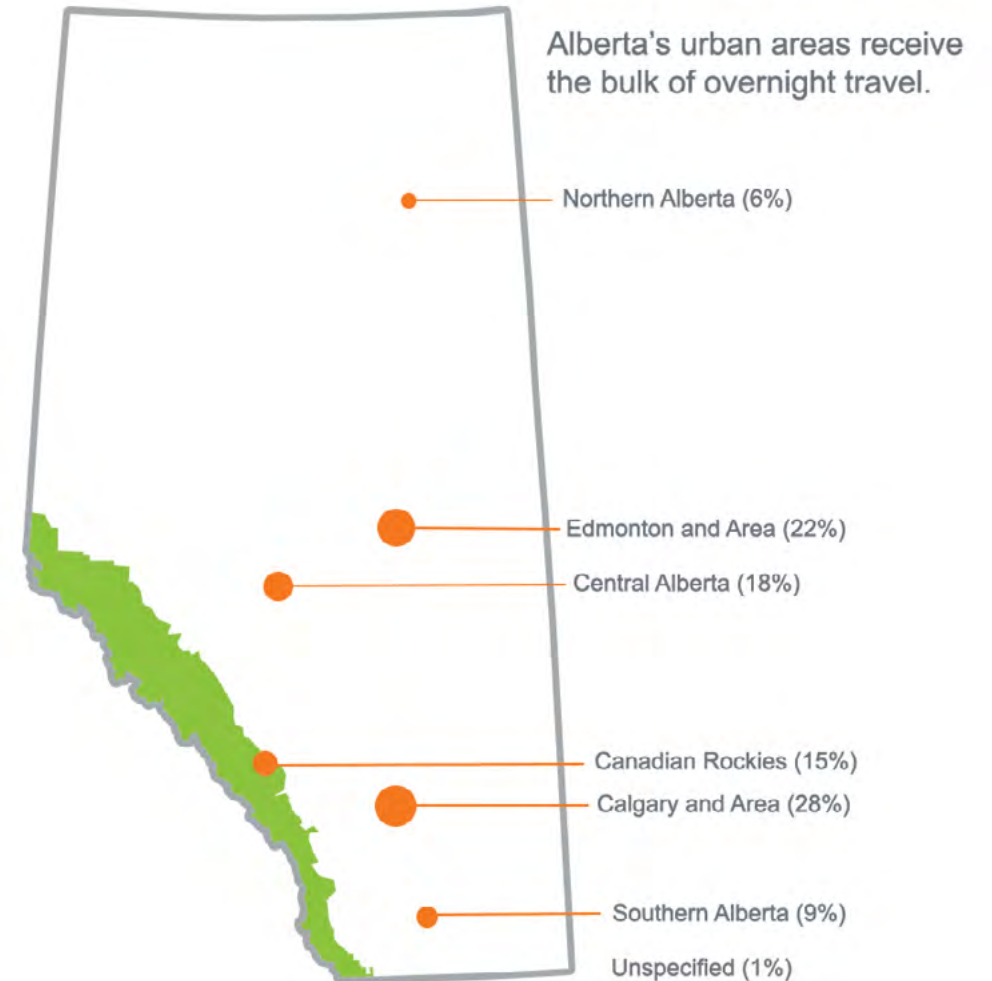
## KEY OBJECTIVES

1. Invest in the sustainability and growth of tourism businesses.
  - Develop products and experiences based on research insights that attract high-value visitors.
  - Enable the development of authentic Indigenous tourism experiences.
  - Advance tourism's bench strength through targeted training aligned with Travel Alberta's strategic priorities.
2. Build destination capacity to ensure a sustainable future in tourism.
  - Initiate a tourism investment program supporting industry's recovery and provide stimulus for future growth.
  - Advance the appreciation of the visitor economy in Alberta communities.
  - Champion tourism development that supports quality of life benefits to residents.
3. Enable the development of globally competitive tourism clusters, experiences, and corridors.
  - Expand the seasonality of destinations and geographic dispersion of visitors.

### 2019 PERSON VISITS



Source: Statistics Canada (2019).



Source: Statistics Canada (2018).



## TRAVEL ALBERTA RESPONSE

To deliver on our expanded mandate and support the recovery of Alberta's tourism sector, Travel Alberta will focus efforts on new and enhanced programs and services that concentrate on expanding destination and product development. We will continue to leverage and grow travel to our mature destinations with a focus on the winter and shoulder seasons as well as attracting a high value visitor.

To increase our visitor capacity and provide economic diversification to Alberta communities, we will focus on developing high potential destinations that will lure travellers to communities and regions in all seasons. We will support industry recovery through investments that drive partnerships and business growth, and we will assist with new capital development opportunities that contribute to job creation and future revenue for the visitor economy.

Travel Alberta will deploy development strategies which combine research, planning, policy, and capacity building to enable businesses and communities to make informed tourism development decisions, address impediments to success, and set the course to capitalize on future opportunities.

### Corridors and Clusters

Travel Alberta will work with communities and stakeholders to further develop their local tourism economy through a shared vision that provides benefits for both visitors and residents. Concentrating on clusters and corridors which represent a geographical grouping of visitor-focused products and services or a perceived route, the focus will be on collaboration and a common strategic plan. These will include businesses within the tourism value chain and public organizations that work together to create a collective competitive advantage – attracting high-value visitors and as a result, attracting new businesses and spurring economic and community vibrancy.

#### Experience Clusters

Travellers are looking for unique and more in-depth opportunities

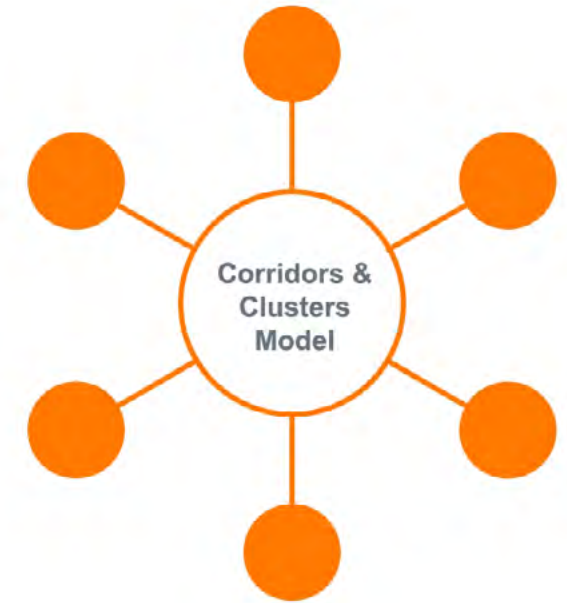
to engage in the destinations they visit. Understanding our target audience and designing experiences to meet the demand for experiential travel is the first step. Clustering these unique offerings is key to delivering amazing visitor experiences. Working with businesses, municipal leaders, destination organizations, and other supporting organizations, we will demonstrate the power of collaboration and provide support through the activation phase. Our work will include assessing and addressing gaps and opportunities in products, collaboration, and positioning. In the future, sustaining the cluster will become the role of the destination organization and the local community.

#### Product Clusters

There are types of products that Alberta is known for – like dinosaurs and outdoor adventure – and those where we could own a greater share of mind – like culinary, agri-tourism and Indigenous tourism. To effectively grow these product clusters, we'll use product demand research and develop strategies and partnerships that will help us foster collaboration between existing businesses and guide development for new businesses and new corridors.

#### Corridors

Corridor development can create itineraries and critical linkages between communities. Focusing on themes helps to define the experience and can attract new travellers to explore routes and destinations they may never have considered. Assessing existing products and the potential for new experiences, we'll identify the prime opportunities to develop activity/experience-focused routes that will attract new and returning travellers and enhance our global competitiveness. This will be done in collaboration with businesses, destination organizations, and municipalities, and our support will continue through the activation phase.



### Indigenous Tourism Development

Travel Alberta, in partnership with Indigenous Tourism Alberta, industry partners, and governments, will work to support Indigenous tourism communities and businesses, helping to diversify Alberta's visitor economy across many regions and in all seasons. Associated actions to include supporting the growth and development of Indigenous tourism experiences through a new three-year \$3.75 million partnership funding commitment to Indigenous Tourism Alberta. Travel Alberta will provide support for Indigenous communities through financial, marketing and development support to Indigenous Tourism Alberta, its members and existing Indigenous products and experiences throughout the province.



Warrior Women, Jasper National Park / Indigenous Tourism Alberta / Roam Creative

## Tourism Investment

Travel Alberta will initiate a tourism investment program to ensure the immediate recovery and sustainability of Alberta’s tourism businesses and capitalize on the potential for long-term growth. Historically, there has been a lack of funding available for tourism investment and development in Alberta. According to Travel Alberta’s recent COVID-19 industry impact survey, funding for operational sustainability, new or modified experience offerings, and marketing were identified as priority needs to support recovery.

Travel Alberta is taking a proactive approach to financially assist tourism businesses, municipalities, not-for-profits and destination organizations through a series of grant programs in 2021-22. Travel Alberta will invest \$15.6 million in funding support through the following programs:

### Cooperative Investment Program

To support tourism businesses’ partnership marketing efforts as they restart their operations and assist in the development of new or enhanced experiences based on the travel environment and health

restrictions in place. Funding will support the diversification and/or sustainability of small tourism businesses and organizations impacted by COVID-19.

### Capital Investment Program

To support new tourism infrastructure, assets, and development, planning and research for tourism businesses and communities. The program offers three funding streams designed to:

- Accelerate the completion of new tourism development initiatives.
- Develop destination-based assets to support the disbursement of travel throughout the province, foster collaboration, provide economic stimulus and contribute to the quality of life for destination residents.

Travel Alberta also works in partnership with Invest Alberta to identify needs and capitalize on Alberta investment opportunities, supporting responsible and sustainable development while increasing Alberta’s competitive advantage globally.

## TARGETS

STRATEGIC PILLAR	OUTCOME	METRIC	TARGET 2021-22	TARGET 2022-23	TARGET 2023-24
Place	Tourism businesses are sustained through the pandemic and grow	% change in active tourism businesses	2%	5%	2%
	Product and destinations capacity are increased for a diversified and sustainable visitor economy	# of new market ready experiences	30	35	35
		# of new export ready experiences (Year 2 & 3)	-	10	15



# RESEARCH, DATA AND MEASUREMENT

Research and analytics serve as a critical business function by producing timely and relevant strategic insights to support Travel Alberta, the ministry responsible for tourism, and industry partners in making informed business decisions and maximizing investments to rebuild and grow Alberta's visitor economy.

Conducting first party research and analyzing third party sources provides an understanding of the economic impact, market potential, and visitor intent and behaviours. Employing business intelligence platforms and practices, Travel Alberta is empowered with accessible and timely reporting. Strategic performance measurement provides the ability to track and report the effectiveness of the organization in achieving stated business objectives and monitor progress in advancing the recovery and growth of the tourism industry.

Providing timely and relevant research and analytics is essential to the success of Travel Alberta's work. It contributes to the organizational performance measurement and individual business unit targets.

## DIAGNOSTIQUE

Travel Alberta has been supporting Alberta tourism businesses by providing timely and relevant research and insights since its inception as a Crown corporation in 2009. However, to date, this responsibility has been shared between the government department responsible for tourism and Travel Alberta. Under an expanded mandate, clarity of roles and responsibilities is needed to ensure the efficient and accurate holistic reporting of research and insights provided to government and industry partners and utilized for business planning and decision-making purposes.

Essential to the research and insights that Travel Alberta delivers is

the established business intelligence platform containing consolidated performance and indicator data. This automated reporting provides line of sight on business performance and generates efficient insights. These insights are central to business decisions in marketing and the measurement of overall business performance for the organization and tourism stakeholders.

Through the development of a balanced scorecard, Travel Alberta evaluates its success in reaching its goals, which in turn demonstrates how well it is doing in delivering on its mandate. The scorecard is also used as a management tool for allocating and aligning resources to make the greatest strategic impact. In addition to the goals specific to the corporation's program areas and operations, the overarching goals promote the health and prosperity of the broader industry that Travel Alberta's efforts feed into. Cumulatively, the metrics are meaningful and useful to both internal and external stakeholder.

## KEY OBJECTIVES

1. Increase data sets and internal analytical capacity to support Travel Alberta's expanded mandate.
2. Improve insight products for broader consumption by industry and key decision makers in the Government of Alberta.
3. Support the organization and industry partners with consumer and market insights.
4. Enhance measurement to demonstrate the effectiveness and value of Travel Alberta investments.
5. Provide timely and accessible business performance data and reporting.

## TRAVEL ALBERTA RESPONSE

To ensure Travel Alberta and the tourism industry are better equipped with strategic insights to guide destination management efforts, the suite of research and data products and resources will be improved and expanded. By consolidating these resources under Travel Alberta, as the primary lead for tourism research, these products will be more accessible and streamlined. Additionally, Travel Alberta will collaborate with key stakeholders on designing and implementing measurement frameworks to provide greater consistency in communicating the value proposition of destination management organizations and finding efficiencies when conducting research and acquiring data.



Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump World Heritage Site / Roth & Ramberg

# PEOPLE, OPERATIONS AND BUDGET

Over the last few years, Travel Alberta taken a critical look at business operations to maximize productivity, corporate efficiency, and budget allocation towards development and promotional activities in support of Alberta’s visitor economy. With the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacting the tourism sector, this has become even more critical.

## DIAGNOSTIQUE

### People

Travel Alberta has built a strong, cohesive, and engaging corporate culture. The use of cloud supported technologies has enabled the team to continue to be highly productive through the pandemic, make informed business decisions, and maintain our commitment to high performance.

Under the expanded mandate, Travel Alberta will need to expand quickly and effectively and establish new lines of business, to deliver on new roles and responsibilities required of the organization. This urgency is coupled with the current state of our industry and the increased need to support the rebuild and long-term growth of Alberta’s visitor economy.

### Operations

Travel Alberta maintains a strong commitment to operational excellence, consistently looking to increase efficiencies, strengthen controls to manage risk and implement best practices. This includes the use of

collaboration tools and automating business processes, investments in data, security, and providing seamless access to information to foster an organizational test-and-learn attitude that embraces agility, diverse thinking and a results-oriented approach.

## KEY OBJECTIVES

1. Grow internal capacity and capability and align performance expectations.
2. Improve Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) within our organization.
3. Leverage technology systems and support a digital workplace.
4. Create organizational agility.

## TRAVEL ALBERTA RESPONSE

With an increased budget allocation of \$66 million (over three years), Travel Alberta is committed to putting our industry first. By directing more than 90 per cent of Travel Alberta’s budget to programs and services that directly support our industry partners, we are leading the path to recovery to ensure that Alberta’s visitor economy is ready to welcome back visitors when it is safe to do so.

## TARGETS

STRATEGIC PILLAR	OUTCOME	METRIC	TARGET 2021-22	TARGET 2022-23	TARGET 2023-24
Corporate Efficiency and Effectiveness	Funds available for programs and services are maximized	OpEx % of total expenses	< 10%	< 10%	< 10%
	Corporate culture remains strong and there is a high degree of pride in working for Travel Alberta	Team member engagement	80%	80%	80%
	Enable social change through commitment to Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI)	Representation in the team member %	Team representation: 25% of population in all categories	Team representation: 60% of population in all categories	Team representation equal to population



# SCORECARD

Travel Alberta's updated performance measurement framework was informed by a jurisdictional review of best practices and reflect the organization's expanded mandate as a destination management organization. The updated draft corporate scorecard balances business outcomes attributable to Travel Alberta programs and investments as well as the industry's overall collective performance.

To strengthen accountability, the measurement plan consists of a multi-tiered approach to tracking and reporting the effectiveness of the organization over the course of the three-year business plan cycle. The overarching scorecard includes a collection of metrics based on the activities of each business area as well as macro level industry metrics to monitor progress in advancing the recovery and growth of the tourism industry. In alignment with the scorecard, program measures for each business unit flow into personal balanced scorecards for leaders and individuals within the organization.

Travel Alberta's scorecard has evolved to reflect the corporate goals pertaining to the strategic priorities of Marketing, Access, and Place as well as organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Specifically, there are new measures for following:

- Attributable revenue from Travel Alberta's marketing investments
- Restoring Alberta's air access to destinations lost through the pandemic as well as establishing service to new destinations
- Destination development investments focused on sustainability and growth of tourism businesses and building destination capacity
- Social change through commitment to Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI)

In addition to Travel Alberta's corporate goals, the scorecard contains macro level industry metrics to monitor progress in advancing the recovery of the tourism industry.

With the development of new lines of business, some of the metrics

are still in development and may require the acquisition of additional data sources. Where this is the case, year one will be considered the baseline from which targets for subsequent years will be set.

Additionally, given the dynamic nature of the COVID pandemic and the border restrictions and recommendation against non-essential travel, the scorecard targets were developed based on the following assumptions:

- International borders open in November 2021
- Alberta benefits from increased domestic traffic while borders remain closed
- Government of Alberta will begin to ease restrictions in June and travel demand will immediately begin to increase. Partner marketing programs restart in June 2021
- Government of Alberta lifts the recommendation against non-essential travel towards the end of June 2021. Travel Alberta branded in-province marketing will restart in July 2021
- Re-start International awareness marketing by September 2021 for winter 2021-22

Should the assumptions not be realized, the targets will be re-evaluated and adjusted accordingly.

Under an expanded mandate, Travel Alberta will evolve its scorecard to reflect the addition of new roles and responsibilities and the recovery of Alberta's tourism sector.



Edmonton / George Simhoni

## 2020-21 SCORECARD

FOCUS AREA	MEASUREMENT	RELEVANCE	ACTUALS AS OF Q3	FY2020-21 TARGET
RESPONSE AND ALIGNMENT	Number of returning Travellers / Snowbirds	Demonstrates the effectiveness of the campaign investment in encouraging Canadians to return home before border closures.	112,000	N/A <sup>1</sup>
	Reach and Impressions	Measures the number of times the message was delivered to encourage Albertans to stay home to help flatten the COVID case curve.	12,959,254	N/A <sup>1</sup>
	Research Consumption	Page views of the research on Industry.TravelAlberta.com are an indicator of the usefulness of the insights products for the tourism industry.	12,136	14,942
	Value of the Travel Alberta team in support of tourism partners	An indicator of the value industry sees in the outreach, guidance and support provided during the pandemic	TBD <sup>2</sup>	72%
DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT	Overall Industry Satisfaction	Provides a gauge on the level of awareness, usage and value of Travel Alberta programs and services, which helps identify key services of focus.	TBD <sup>2</sup>	75%
	Value of cooperative investment to supporting Alberta tourism businesses	An indicator of the value industry places on the Cooperative Investment program, which informs future decisions on the type and level of investment.	TBD <sup>2</sup>	75%
DESTINATION PROMOTION	Intent to travel to and within Alberta	Represents the potential market size and whether Travel Alberta is moving travellers from awareness to consideration	TBD <sup>3</sup>	4,237,190
	YOY % change in Alberta travel-related Google searches	Represents travellers contemplating a vacation to Alberta which indicates if Travel Alberta is growing domestic consideration of Alberta	-11% <sup>4</sup>	-7%
	Leads to Alberta Tourism Industry	Represents the number of travellers demonstrating their preference for Alberta experiences by clicking through to tourism industry partners	518,200 <sup>5</sup>	926,000
	Booked Room Nights	Assesses the effectiveness of investments made to grow the number of travellers to Alberta and the associated direct economic impact	682,025	850,828
	Support for global travel providers in rebuilding Alberta product	An indicator of the value and effectiveness of support given to travel providers during the pandemic	93%	75%
BUSINESS EXCELLENCE	Team Member engagement	Provides insights into the factors driving engagement including team members' willingness to promote Travel Alberta as a "good place to work"	90%	80%

1 There were no established targets as these unplanned activities were done in response early in the pandemic.

2 The Travel Alberta Industry Satisfaction Survey will be conducted in Q4.

3 The Global Tourism Watch Survey will be conducted in April 2021.

4 Travel searches remain flat with previous end of quarter results at negative 11 per cent and are fairing better than searches for Canada as a whole, which are down 17 per cent. With recommendations to avoid nonessential, it is unlikely to gain enough ground in Q4 to meet the annual target.

5 With the measures put in place to manage the second wave of COVID in Canada, in-province winter marketing was paused on November 26th and interprovincial marketing did not go forward, as such the leads results are behind target.



## 2021-24 SCORECARD

FOCUS AREA	STRATEGIC PILLAR	OUTCOME	METRIC	TARGET 2021-22	TARGET 2022-23	TARGET 2023-24
CORPORATE GOALS	Marketing	Consideration of Alberta as a travel destination has increased	Search growth for Alberta destinations YOY	17% domestic only	9% domestic and U.S.	5% domestic and U.S. and other Int'l
		Marketing investments generate revenue from high-value visitors	Direct economic impact based on attributable room nights	\$7.8M U.S. only	\$9.7M U.S. only	\$13.5M U.S. and other Int't
			Attributable revenue* (In development)	Baseline year	TBD	TBD
	Access	Air service to key destinations is re-established, frequency on key routes is increased and service to new destinations is added	New/recovered Domestic destinations and seat capacity	+ 2 routes + 46K seats	+ 2 routes + 33K seats	+ 2 routes + 18K seats
			New/recovered Transborder destinations and seat capacity	+ 4 routes + 40K seats	+ 2 routes + 32K seats	+ 30K seats
			New/recovered International destinations and seat capacity	+ 12K seats	+ 1 route + 20K seats	+ 1 route + 30K seats
	Place	Tourism businesses are sustained through the pandemic and grow	% change in active tourism businesses	2%	5%	2%
		Product and destinations capacity are increased for a diversified and sustainable visitor economy	# of new market ready experiences	30	35	35
			# of new export ready experiences (Year 2 & 3)	-	10	15
	Corporate Efficiency and Effectiveness	Funds available for programs and services are maximized	OpEx % of total expenses	< 10%	< 10%	< 10%
		Corporate culture remains strong and there is a high degree of pride in working for Travel Alberta	Team member engagement	80%	80%	80%
		Enable social change through commitment to Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI)	Representation in the team member %	Team representation: 25% of population in all categories	Team representation: 60% of population in all categories	Team representation equal to population

## 2021-24 SCORECARD, CONTINUED

FOCUS AREA	STRATEGIC PILLAR	OUTCOME	METRIC	TARGET 2021-22	TARGET 2022-23	TARGET 2023-24
MACRO INDUSTRY GOALS	Revenue	Tourism revenue returns to 2019 level of \$8.2B by 2024	Annual growth rate in expenditures*	38%	36%	20%
		Visitation to Alberta increases	Total visitation*	11,277,000	24,668,000	31,012,000
		Tourism levy returns to 2019 level of \$83.7M	Tourism levy (result of room nights and RevPAR)	\$49M	\$67M	\$80M
	Jobs	Recover tourism-related jobs to 2019 level of 68,000	Direct, indirect and induced full-time equivalent employment related to tourism expenditures (expressed in person years)	37,226	50,762	60,915
	Industry Collaboration & Alignment	Industry capacity is increased through relevant programs, collaboration and alignment	Industry satisfaction survey	75%	75%	75%
	Perceived Tourism Benefits	Residents recognize the social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits of tourism	Resident sentiment (In development)	Baseline year	TBD	TBD

\* Alignment with metrics in JEI Tourism Recovery Plan





Donalda / AV Wakefield

## TRAVEL ALBERTA

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